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CHRISTMAS NIGHT IN THE QUARTERS. By Irwin Russell. With an Introduction by Joel Chandler Harris and a Historical Sketch by Maurice Garland Fulton. Illustrated by E. W. Kemble. New York: The Century Company. \$2.50 net.

"I do not know where could be found to-day a happier or more perfect representation of negro character," says Joel Chandler Harris in the introduction to this book. Extravagant as this praise is, the critical reader feels that within the limits covered by the few poems in this collection it is true. The sale of Pot-liquor, for example, the 'coon dog that can "smell a 'coon fur half-a-mile," Uncle Nick's exposition of "de l'arnin' what a fisherman sh'u'd know," Nebuchadnezzar, the mule that "was sp'iled in raisin'," besides the well-known "Christmas Night in the Quarters,"—all these sketches have not been surpassed by later writers in Negro dialect. From the sketch of Russell's life given by Professor Fulton, it appears, too, that Russell was well aware of what he was doing, that he appreciated fully the richness of the vein he had opened, and that he had looked forward to producing some larger work of more permanent value, a novel or a play, dealing with Negro character and Negro life. "Negro lovers, Negro preachers, Negro 'literary and malevolent' 'sieties,' Negro saints and Negro sinners,—think of what mines of humor and pathos, plot and character, sense and nonsense, are here awaiting development," he wrote in 1877, only two years before his death. He died in his twenty-seventh year just at the time when he was beginning to make writing a serious occupation. "Had he been spared to letters," wrote Joel Chandler Harris, "all the rest of us would have taken back seats so far as representation of life in the South is concerned." Thus this is more than a mere Christmas gift-book. It is a handsome edition of dialect verse that ought to be preserved as a worthy memorial of one of the "South's sad singers."

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THE CONTEMPORARY SHORT STORY. By Harry T. Baker. New York: D. C. Heath and Company.

As the title-page suggests, this is a practical manual for those who wish to write short stories. In his opening chapter the author defines the type of originality needed for success as "a

new 'twist' given to material which, in all other respects, may be essentially old." He then proceeds to note the common faults of the weakly constructed modern short story, such as its unconvincing character, lack of inventiveness, dullness, lack of thorough acquaintance with material, sensationalism, questionable material, weakness in dialogue, unsound character portrayal, and lack of artistic structure. The claims of character over plot are duly emphasized, and the absolute necessity of style, "fame's great antiseptic," is properly enforced. A very useful feature of the book is the discussion of the distinctive characteristics of the leading contemporary magazines and the varying points of view of their editorial staffs. The author has also added to the practical service of his work by attaching to each chapter suggestive exercises for the study of the contemporary short story. As a whole, the book admirably fulfills its purpose,—“to teach promising young authors, whether in or out of college, how to write stories that shall be marketable as well as artistic.”

R. C. BEALE.

A COUNTRY CHILD. By Grant Showerman. New York: The Century Company. \$1.75 net.

Instead of being a continuation of *A Country Chronicle*, this volume serves as an introduction to it and begins the story with the earliest recollections of the narrator, when he succeeded for the first time in going alone as far as the basement door. It is a detailed, realistic narrative of happenings in a small boy's life, told with humor, sympathy, and verisimilitude. The pen-and-ink drawings by George Wright are particularly attractive.

IMMORTALITY AND THE FUTURE: THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL LIFE. By H. R. Mackintosh, D.Phil., D.D., Professor of Theology, New College, Edinburgh; author of "Life on God's Plan." London and New York: Hodder and Stoughton. Second Edition. 1917. Pp. 248. \$1.50.

Though of Greek origin the barbarous-sounding word, eschatology, is the name of the branch of theology that deals with the "last things,"—the future life, the judgment, the coming of the Christ, and so on. In this well-wrought book, Professor Mackintosh gives us perhaps the best recent compendium in